

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended)

Method for automatically packaging empty collapsible tubes (1), that are supplied by a conveyor belt, into a plurality of packaging containers that take up collapsible tubes (1) ~~characterized in that~~ wherein

the supplied collapsible tubes (1) are collected in a row without gaps, supplied in this row to an intermediate storage (13) and then jointly transferred into a packaging container; thereafter the packaging container is conveyed further on.

2. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein several rows of empty collapsible tubes (1) that have been supplied one after the other are collected in the intermediate storage (13) until a sufficient number of empty collapsible tubes (1) is achieved for filling or partially filling a packaging container.

3. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 1 ~~or 2, characterized in that~~ wherein the empty collapsible tubes (1) are arranged in conveyor

trays (3) of a feeder belt (2) and are collected continuously in a row or partial row by means of separately driven and adjustable suction vees (5).

4. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 1, ~~one of claims 1 to 3~~,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein each row containing the desired number of collapsible tubes (1) is compacted so that said tubes come into contact with each other and is transferred into the intermediate storage (13) only after completed compaction.

5. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 1, ~~one of claims 1 to 4~~,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein each collapsible tube (1) in the intermediate storage (13) is in touching contact with a neighboring collapsible tube (1) on top of it at one point only.

6. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 1, ~~one of claims 1 to 5~~,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein each collapsible tube (1) in the intermediate storage (13) is in touching contact with two collapsible tubes (1) on top of it.

7. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 1, ~~one of claims 1 to 6,~~
~~characterized in that~~ wherein a packaging container can be
arranged behind each intermediate storage (13) in a swivelling
and vertically adjustable manner.

8. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein
each packaging container can be arranged on a holding fork (17).

9. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 1, ~~one of claims 1 to 8,~~
~~characterized in that~~ wherein conveyor belts (20, 20', 21, 2')
for the supply of empty and removal of full packaging containers
are arranged at two different levels.

10. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 1, ~~one of claims 1 to 9,~~
~~characterized in that~~ wherein a moving slide transfers all of the
collapsible tubes (1) stored in the intermediate storage (13)
into a packaging container.

11. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 1, ~~one of claims 1 to 10,~~
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the intermediate storage (13) is

provided with a fixed base plate (15) with adjustable lateral guides (24), adjustable limiting plates (25, 25') as well as at least two sets of movable bottom strips (12a, 12b, 12c and 12a', 12b', 12c').

12. (Currently amended)

Method according to claim 11, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the movable bottom strips (12a, 12b, 12c and 12a', 12b', 12c') are arranged in the intermediate storage (13) such that they can be passed through the base plate (15) and are movable synchronously with each other.